fifty thousand livres a year by Madame de Biro0's death.

January ^oth, 1797

I wish the elections of April may pass without a heavy storm; but the clouds are gathering black. The meetings of the public assemblies are tempestuous. Murders have been lately perpetrated by one party or the other. I trust it may blow over.

The conversation of the day is of a journalist being taken to the Directory and whipped in the President's apartments. What will be the issue I cannot tell, but all the papers are full of it. For my part, my wish is to inspire the Government with a proper idea of my character, to interfere with no party, to attend only to the subject of my mission, but, at the same time, to cultivate *cultivandos*. I hope this can lead to no harm. I have neither cipher nor means of transmitting any intelligence ; therefore, were I ever so much disposed to be active, I must remain quiet.

Now comes another letter about Mrs. Talbot and her niece 1 Who the deuce she is

I know not, so shall pass her over as quickly as I can.